John Jennett Jany 30 - 1816

A

LETTER

TO

The Rev. Dr. FARMER, &c.

*** The Bookſellers who publiſhed my edition of Shakſpeare's Works in eleven volumes, crown octavo, having alſo publiſhed an edition of his plays only, in ſeven volumes, 12mo, which in many of the annual London catalogues, has been improperly aſcribed to me, I take this opportunity to ſay, that this ſmall edition is not my work. I am therefore not entitled to its merits, whatever they may be, nor anſwerable for any of its defects. It is, I make no doubt, carefully executed; but being intended merely to accommodate ſuch perſons as wiſh for a cheap edition of this poet, it contains neither my Hiſtory of the Stage, nor any of the other Diſſertations which accompany my work, nor the author's Poems; and inſtead of the copious notes which I have given, ſhort verbal explications only are, in general, ſubjoined to the text.

A ſlight miſtake in one of the notes on *Coriolanus* having eſcaped me while I was printing my APPENDIX, in which I endeavoured as much as poſſible to ſave the *gentle critick* trouble, by pointing out my own errors, thoſe who are poſſeſſed of my edition of Shakſpeare, are requeſted to correct it thus.

In Vol. VII. p. 220, is the following note:

"Sic. *You ſhew too much of that*, &c.] This ſpeech is given in the old copy to Cominius. It was rightly attributed to Sicinius by Mr. Theobald."

This note, with the change of only one word, belongs in fact to a preceding line, beginning with the ſame perſonal pronoun, to which it ought to have been referred; ["You *are like to do ſuch buſineſs.*"] and each of theſe lines beginning with the ſame word was in ſome meaſure the cauſe of the miſtake. The reader is therefore deſired to expunge the note above quoted, and to ſubſtitute the following in its ſtead:

Cor. *You are like to do ſuch buſineſs.*] This ſpeech is given in the old copy to Cominius. It was rightly attributed to Coriolanus by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. RICHARD FARMER, D.D.

MASTER OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

RELATIVE TO THE EDITION OF

SHAKSPEARE,

PUBLISHED IN MDCCXC,

AND SOME LATE CRITICISMS ON THAT WORK.

By EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Alter rixator de lana ſæpe caprina
Propugnat, nugis armatus; ſcilicet, ut non
Sit mihi prima fides, et vere quod placet, ut non
Acriter elatrem, pretium ætas altera ſordet. Hor.

—— QUEM OPINIO PROPRIÆ PERSPICACIÆ, QUA SIBI VIDETUR ERRORES QUOSDAM ANIMADVERTISSE, DE STATU MENTIS DETURBAVIT. B. Jonſon.

LONDON:
Printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row; T. Payne, at the Meuse-gate; and R. Faulder, in Bond-Street.
MDCCXCII.

Half-title wanting

A

LETTER

TO

The Rev. DR. FARMER, &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH you have long left the *primroſe path* of poetry and criticiſm, for more grave and important ſtudies, you will, I am confident, very cheerfully ſpend an hour with me in traverſing the old Shakſpearian field, where we have ſo often expatiated on "the ever-fruitful ſubject" of our great dramatick poet and his Commentators.

When I firſt undertook to give an edition of his Works, it did not appear to me ſo arduous a taſk as I found it. After devoting ſeveral years to their reviſal and elucidation, I had the honour to preſent my edition to the publick in November, 1790, and immediately afterwards ſet

out on a viſit to ſome very dear friends in Ireland, whom I had not ſeen for a long time. During my ſtay there, I was not a little pleaſed to learn from every quarter that my work had not been diſapproved of by the publick; and on my return to England laſt ſummer was ſtill more highly gratified by your warm, and I fear too partial, approbation of my labours; by that of Mr. Burke, whoſe mind is of ſuch a graſp as to embrace at once the greateſt and the minuteſt objects, and who, in the midſt of his numerous and important avocations, has always found time for the calmer purſuits of philoſophy and polite literature; by that of the moſt amiable and judicious friend whom we and the publick have lately had the irreparable misfortune to loſe, Sir Joſhua Reynolds; of that excellent critick and profound ſcholar, Dr. Joſeph Warton; and of many others, whoſe encomiums would ſtamp a value on any literary performance. When I mention theſe reſpected names, let me ſhelter myſelf under the example of the great poet who preceded me in this undertaking:

" Well-natured Garth inflam'd with early
praiſe,
" And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd
my lays."

With

With this detail, I am ſenſible, the publick has very little concern; nor is it obtruded on them from any idle vanity, but merely as a neceſſary introduction to the following pages.

The ſubject on which I am now to trouble you, has one very unpleaſing circumſtance attending it; that I cannot diſcuſs it without introducing myſelf as a principal figure on the canvas. It is, I truſt, unneceſſary to aſſure you, who have known me ſo long, that it is the laſt ſubject which I ſhould have *choſen*; it has, as you will ſee, been forced upon me. However, though from the nature of the diſquiſition it is impoſſible for me to keep where I wiſh to remain, in the back ground, I will promiſe not to detain you long from much more important and intereſting topicks.

Almoſt all the copies of my edition having been ſold, an anonymous writer, at the end of fifteen months, finding it a ſubject of ſufficient notoriety to procure ſome attention to an invective againſt it in the form of a pamphlet, has lately thought fit to iſſue one from the preſs, fraught with the uſual materials of hypercriticiſm; that is, duly furniſhed with unbluſhing cavil, falſe argument, and falſe quotation;

with

" ——— captious art,
" And ſnip-ſnap ſhort, and interruption ſmart,
" And demonſtration thin, and theſes thick,
" And major, minor, and concluſion quick."

Our late excellent friend, Dr. Johnſon, uſed to ſay, that an author might be ſatisfied with the publick approbation, when his name was able to *carry double*. In this reſpect therefore this writer ſhould ſeem to have intended me a compliment, and as ſuch I accept it; though I have not vanity enough to ſuppoſe that I can ſuſtain ſuch a heap of rubbiſh as has been raked up, to furniſh the number of pages neceſſary for the occaſion.

I will not ſtain my paper by tranſcribing any part of the vulgar ribaldry with which this production abounds. Let it reſt with the low ſocieties among whom it has been picked up, and in the bookſeller's warehouſe, where, with other neglected traſh, it will long remain in undiſturbed repoſe. But as two or three *facts* have been mentioned, which, however diſtorted or diſcoloured, have ſomething like the ſemblance, though nothing of the reality, of truth, I ſhall detain you for a ſhort time, ſolely with a view of obviating the effect which is ſometimes produced by ſilent contempt and unrefuted miſrepreſentation. Our inimitable

inimitable poet, who on moſt occaſions is our beſt inſtructor, you remember, adviſes us, not to " give advantage

" To ſtubborn criticks, apt, *without a theme*,
" For depravation."

The firſt fact that I ſhall take notice of, is contained in the following paragraph:

" MR. MALONE, in the year 1780, when publiſhing a *Supplement to Shakſpeare* of plays which he never wrote*, modeſtly remarked, that

* This SUPPLEMENT contained ſeveral additional comments on the author; a correct edition of all his poems, then for the firſt time faithfully printed from the original copies, and illuſtrated with notes; and ſeven plays which had been *imputed* to him. Theſe I was ſo far from publiſhing as Shakſpeare's, that I expreſsly declared in the preface that of five of them I did not believe a ſingle line to have been written by him; and my deciſion has been fully confirmed by the manuſcripts which I have ſince diſcovered in Dulwich College, in which the names of the four authors of *Sir John Oldcaſtle* (a play printed in 1600, with Shakſpeare's name at full length in the title-page,) are luckily preſerved.—See the late edition of Shakſpeare, Vol. I. P. II. *Emendations and Additions*, p. 317.—The writer's *meaning*, however, as honeſt *Sir Hugh Evans* ſays, *was good*; for from the words—" A Supplement to Shakſpeare *of plays which he never wrote*," the reader would naturally conclude, 1. that this Supplement contained plays only; and 2. that the editor was weak enough to believe them to be the productions of our author, and to aſcribe to him *what he never wrote*.

'by a diligent collation of all the old copies *hitherto** diſcovered, and the judicious reſtoration of ancient readings, the text of this author ſeemed then finally ſettled.' Since that period, however, he has been labouring 'with unceaſing ſolicitude,' for the ſpace of 'eight years,' to convince the publick that he had, if not directly aſſerted the thing which was not, at leaſt gone a little further than was conſiſtent with the exact ſtate of the caſe. For, if the text had been already diligently collated with all the old copies, why ſhould he make ſuch a parade of having collated it himſelf? If it had not been ſo collated, why ſhould he ſay it had? This fact is therefore manifeſt, upon Mr. Malone's own evidence, that the text of Shakſpeare had never been collated, whether diligently or not, with all or any of the old copies, by any perſon before Mr. Malone."

Twenty ſix years have now elapſed ſince Mr. Steevens iſſued out propoſals for publiſhing the plays of Shakſpeare, of which in that period he has given the publick three editions, each of them elaborated with his utmoſt care and diligence. The year 1766, in which his propoſals firſt came forth, ſhould be doubly dear

* To this *quaintneſs* a line of Martial may be well applied:
" — male cum recitas, incipit eſſe tuus."

to every intelligent reader of this poet; not only as the era when that gentleman firſt undertook the arduous taſk of illuſtrating his dramas by the contemporary writers, a taſk which he executed with great ability, but becauſe the moſt concluſive Eſſay * that ever appeared on a ſubject of criticiſm, was then written, and the long-agitated queſtion concerning the learning of Shakſpeare was for ever decided. In the year 1780, fourteen years after Mr. Steevens's work was firſt undertaken, and two years after the ſecond edition of it had appeared, I publiſhed a Supplement to that edition in two volumes, in the preface to which is the paragraph above quoted. Having a very high opinion of the diligence, acuteneſs, and learning of Mr. Steevens, to whom all the admirers of Shakſpeare have great obligations, I in common with the reſt of the publick conſidered myſelf as much indebted to his labours; and therefore did not then heſitate to ſay that the text of the author on which he had been above twelve years employed, *ſeemed* to be finally ſettled. If I had uſed a ſtill ſtronger phraſe, ſome allowance might be made for the partiality of friendſhip, and for that reſpect which is due from every ſcholar to ac-

* *An Eſſay on the Learning of Shakſpeare*, by the Rev. Richard Farmer; publiſhed in January, 1767; reprinted, with great additions, in the ſame year.

knowledged abilities and learning. But I claim no ſuch allowance; for I ſaid only what I ſtrictly and ſincerely thought. Not chooſing however to ſpeak confidently and poſitively of a matter concerning which I could not be certain, I uſed the words—"*ſeems* now finally ſettled." I had not then undertaken to publiſh an edition of Shakſpeare, nor regularly collated a ſingle play of that author with the authentick copies. When my admiration of his innumerable beauties led me to undertake an edition of his works, I then thought it my duty to exert every faculty to make it as perfect as I could; and in order to enſure a genuine text, to collate word by word every line of his plays and poems with the original and authentick copies; a taſk equally new and arduous. By this laborious proceſs I obtained ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOUR EMENDATIONS of the text; that is, I found that the text of this author, notwithſtanding all the well-employed diligence and care of the late editors in correcting the errors of former copies, and rejecting the adulterations introduced in the ſecond folio and the ſubſequent impreſſions, ſtill remained corrupted in ſixteen hundred and fifty four places, and I corrected it accordingly; not as that word is ſometimes underſtood, by capricious innovation, or fanciful conjecture, but by the reſtoration

tion of the poet's words, as they are found in the only copies of authority.

We are now, however, told, that from this collation but little advantage has been derived; and, as a *proof* of this aſſertion, it is ſtated, that in collating ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND LINES (for ſuch nearly is the number of lines in theſe plays) I have not always been equally attentive; that in this tedious labour (wonderful to tell!) I have been guilty of *eight* errors!! ſo that it appears, that I have only corrected the plays of this author in *one thouſand ſix hundred and fifty-four places*, and might have corrected them in *one thouſand ſix hundred and ſixty-two*. Of theſe eight additional reſtorations I ſhall very gladly avail myſelf in the quarto edition of this poet's works, which I am now about to put to the preſs*; and

* While foreign countries can boaſt of magnificent impreſſions of the works of their celebrated authors, a ſplendid edition of the Plays and Poems of our great dramatick poet, with the illuſtrations which the various editors and commentators have furniſhed, is yet a *deſideratum* in Engliſh literature. I had ten years ago ſketched out a plan for ſuch an edition, and intend immediately to carry a ſimilar ſcheme into execution. It is almoſt unneceſſary to add, that the ſame gratuitous zeal which induced me to undertake the former edition, will accompany this reviſal of it; and that no diligence

and if from any quarter, however unreſpectable, others ſhall be added to that number, they ſhall be accepted in like manner; but I do not expect that will be the caſe; as it is probable, if any further diſcoveries of the ſame kind could have been made, they would have been pointed out. *Dum ſilent, clamant.*—Dr. Johnſon has juſtly obſerved, that a diſcurſive mind cannot be always kept ſteadily fixed on evaneſcent truth. I never flattered myſelf ſo far as to ſuppoſe, that in this long work "the indiſpoſed and ſickly fit" ſhould not ſometimes render me unequal to the taſk; that what happens to all mankind, occaſional languor and temporary inability, ſhould not affect me like other mortals: I reſolved, however, to make the beſt exertions in my power; and ſometimes flattered myſelf that by this proceſs, which had never before been attempted, and a long acquaintance with the writers of Shakſpeare's age, I ſhould be able to improve on all the former editions of this author; but in the moment of the moſt ſanguine hope I could not ſuppoſe that in this col-

gence or care of mine ſhall be wanting to render this new edition of my work, which is to be ornamented with engravings, and to be printed in fifteen volumes, royal quarto, worthy of our greateſt Engliſh poet.—The firſt two volumes are intended to be publiſhed next year.

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lation my vigilance ſhould have been over-watched only in eight inſtances; nor, without ſo deciſive a proof as the malignant induſtry of a petty adverſary has furniſhed, could I have believed it. I ſay *eight* inſtances; for though *thirteen* over-ſights have been enumerated, *five* of them *have no foundation in truth.*

1. The firſt of theſe is in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Vol. I. p. 154.

Speed. Item, ſhe can *ſew.*

Launce. That's as much as to ſay, can ſhe ſo?

"*Both* the folios," ſays this redoubted critick, "read—*ſow*, which is manifeſtly requiſite. Probably, however, the editor may ſuppoſe *ſew* and *ſo* to have the ſame pronunciation."

With the ſecond folio, here cited, or any other corrupted copy of our author, I have no concern. The firſt and *only* authentick copy of this play printed in folio, in 1623, (for there is no quarto,) reads, if letters are to be enumerated, not *ſow*, but *ſowe*. When a quibble is intended, the word in the old copy is often intentionally miſpelt, in order

to

to mark it more plainly to the reader. In the preſent inſtance, however, this may not have been the caſe, for the word *few* was variouſly ſpelt in Shakſpeare's time, and Milton writes it, though improperly, *ſow*. Throughout my edition, as is mentioned in my preface, I have not adhered to ancient ſpelling, but adopted that which is now generally uſed, and which I conſidered as juſt. I have done ſo in this inſtance. With reſpect to the ſimilarity of ſound between *few* and *ſo*, there can be no doubt, from the paſſage before us, but that the two words were pronounced alike in Shakſpeare's days, as they are at preſent by all who do not deviate from received modes from affectation or ignorance.

2. Vol. II. p. 71. *Meaſure for Meaſure.*

"Let me hear you ſpeak *further*." "Both editions—*farther*, a word entirely different from *further*, though too frequently confounded with it by ignorant perſons."

Here is a queſtion merely of propriety in ſpelling, and whenever I have any doubts on that ſubject I ſhall take counſel from ſome other preceptor than this critick. In the authentick copy of 1623, the word is very frequently ſpelt

ſpelt *farther*, for which, on the ground already mentioned, I have given *further*, becauſe that appears to me to be the true mode of ſpelling this word; and Dr. Johnſon, whoſe authority is ſomewhat higher than this anonymous writer's, was of this opinion*. The two words were undoubtedly uſed indiſcriminately by Shakſpeare, who certainly did not give himſelf much concern about grammatical diſquiſitions.

3. The third ſuppoſed error, for which I am not anſwerable as an overſight in collating the old copies, is in Vol. II. p. 151. *The Comedy of Errors.*

" If it be, ſir, pray eat none of it."

It is a mere error of the preſs. The pronoun *I* (I pray, eat none of it,) I find, on looking into my papers, was inadvertently omitted by the compoſitor at the preſs, as the metre of the line ſhews.

4. Vol. II. p. 190. *Ibidem.*

" And much different from the man he was."

" The folios (we are told) read—And much, *much* different."

* See his *Dict.* in v. *further.*

The

The ſingle remark here neceſſary to be made is, that *the fact is not ſo.* The only authentick copy of this play, the folio of 1623, which is now before me, exhibits the line as I have printed it.

5. Vol. II. p. 477. *A Midſummer-Night's Dream.*

" Through the foreſt have I gone,
" But Athenian *found* I none."

" *All* the old editions (we are again inſtructed) read—*find.*"

Here we have another inſtance of dogmatical and preſumptuous ignorance; and the ſame ſhort anſwer will ſerve. *The fact is not ſo.* The copy of *A Midſummer-Night's Dream*, printed by Fiſher, which is in ſome places preferable to that printed by Roberts, which laſt appears to have been followed in the folio, reads—" *found* I none," as I have printed the line.

The *eight* reſtorations which I am now enabled to add to thoſe I have already made in the text, are theſe: In Vol. I. p. 80, I have inadvertently followed former editors in printing " if *thou* be pleas'd," for—" if *you* be pleas'd;" in p. 140 of the ſame volume, " *more* precious," for—" *moſt* precious;" in p. 155, " *I cannot* help," for

for—"*cannot I* help;" in p. 174, "*this* paper," "for *his* paper;" in Vol. II. p. 70, *ſhould*, for *ſhall*; in p. 143, *diſpos'd*, for *beſtow'd*; in p. 157, "Ay, let none enter," for—"Ay, *and* let none enter;" and in p. 190, *therefore*, for *thereof*.

It is not an incurious ſpeculation to conſider how many errors the writer to whom I am indebted for the above liſt, would have been guilty of in collating and printing one hundred thouſand lines. He tells us himſelf that ſome remarks which he publiſhed a few years ago, "have been repreſented as the moſt incorrect publication that ever appeared, and that, from the liſt of *errata* in the book itſelf, and the additional one given in another pamphlet, the charge does not ſeem to be without foundation." We have ſeen that in collating *thirteen* paſſages he has committed, if not *three*, certainly *two* errors; if therefore he had undertaken to collate one hundred thouſand lines, his inaccuracies according to the moſt moderate calculation would only have amounted to about FIFTEEN THOUSAND.

The next high crime and miſdemeanor with which the late editor of Shakſpeare is charged, is,

is, that in his preface he has *proved* the editor of the ſecond folio, printed in 1632, to have been entirely ignorant of Shakſpeare's phraſeology and metre, and the book itſelf *of no* AUTHORITY *whatſoever*; yet moſt ſtrangely and inconſiſtently he has adopted ſome emendations of the text from that corrupted copy. To the firſt part of this charge I plead guilty, but am at a loſs to know under what penal ſtatute it ſhould be claſſed. To this minute critic indeed, who alſo publiſhed in 1783 ſome remarks on Mr. Steevens's edition of Shakſpeare, (in which that gentleman, Dr. Johnſon, and others, were treated with juſt as much decency and reſpect, as our late ingenious and learned friend Mr. Warton had been in another forgotten pamphlet,) to him it was a very ſerious grievance; for he appears to have ſet up for a hypercritick on Mr. Steevens, without a ſingle quarto copy of our author's plays, and, I ſuſpect, without being poſſeſſed of the only authentick folio edition. If that was the caſe, to depreciate the vitiated folio on which he was generally obliged to depend, was to rob him of the only tool with which he could carry on his trade, and to place him in the ſtate in which poor Parſon Adams would have found himſelf, if his hoſt had convinced him that his ſolitary half-guinea was a counterfeit.

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With reſpect to the other part of the charge, it is certainly true that while almoſt every page of the ſecond folio is disfigured by printer's blunders, and arbitrary and capricious deviations from the original copy, the editor of that book has in a few places corrected ſuch manifeſt errors of the preſs in the elder copy, as could not eſcape a perſon of the moſt ordinary capacity, who had been but one month converſant with a printing-houſe. Of theſe corrections, ſuch as they are, (to the knowledge of which the objector was led by my own notes,) a pompous liſt has been made from the late edition, for the purpoſe of ſhewing an inconſiſtency in the editor: but in the courſe which I have followed, when the matter is truly ſtated and examined, the ſmalleſt inconſiſtency will not be found.

To aſcertain whether the ſecond complete edition of our author's plays was authentick, which had never been attempted before, was, in forming the text of thoſe plays, of the higheſt conſequence. Hence it was that I employed a good deal of labour on that point, as may be ſeen by turning to my preface, where the examination of that queſtion takes up no leſs than twenty-three pages *; and I may ven-

* Pref. pp. xix—xlii.

ture to ſay, without any fear of being refuted, that I have *proved*, not by dogmatical aſſertion, but by a minute enumeration of particular paſſages, that book to be of no *authority* whatſoever. How ſo wild a notion as that it was of any authority, ſhould ever have been entertained by any one but the writer whoſe miſrepreſentations I am now expoſing, is perfectly unaccountable. The ſecond edition of a printed book can only derive authority from its being printed with the author's laſt corrections, or from ſome more correct manuſcript of his work than that from which the firſt edition was printed. From whence ſhould the authority of the ſecond folio be derived? We know that Shakſpeare did not correct his manuſcripts for the preſs, even for the firſt edition which was publiſhed in 1623:—where then were the corrections which were made in the ſecond, found? Can it be believed, that the printer or editor, who did not, as I have proved incontrovertibly, examine one of the quarto printed plays *, which were then common in every hand, ſhould have hunted after the manuſcripts from which the firſt folio was in ſome caſes

* Pref. to the late edition of Shakſpeare, p. xxvii, note 4.

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printed, and which it is highly probable were deſtroyed at the preſs; or that any diligence ſhould at the end of nine years have recovered their ſoiled and mutilated fragments? Such a ſuppoſition is as wild and chimerical, as many of that editor's arbitrary interpolations. This fancy ſhould ſeem to have originated from its having been thrown out in ſome modern publication, the title of which I have forgotten, that Heminge and Condell, the editors of the firſt folio, were *probably* likewiſe editors of the ſecond, which appeared in 1632; an aſſertion which, before the two books had been minutely examined and compared, and before the time of their reſpective deaths had been aſcertained, might paſs current enough; but unluckily for this theory, after a long ſearch in the Prerogative Office, I diſcovered the wills of both theſe actors, and have ſhewn that Condell died in 1627, and Heminge in the year 1630*. On this ſubject, however, we are not obliged to have recourſe to inferences from dates, or to conjecture, in order to prove that all the corrections, emendations, or interpolations of that copy (by whatever name they may be called) were arbitrary and capricious. The nume-

Hiſtorical Account of the Engliſh ſtage, pp. 190. 199.

rous proofs which I collected for this purpoſe, were given *ex abundanti*. If inſtead of ſhewing that the editor, not knowing that the double comparative was the common phraſeology of Shakſpeare's time, had ſubſtituted for it a more grammatical form, giving us *more ſafe*, *more worthy* and *more rich*, for *more ſafer*, *more worthier* and *more richer*; that he did not know that the double negative was the common and authorized language of that age *; that when the beginning of a line in the elder copy was accidentally omitted at the preſs, inſtead of attempting to cure the defect in the right place, he added ſome words at the end of the line, and by his addition made the paſſage nonſenſe †; that he was utterly ignorant of his author's elliptical language, as well as of his metre;—if inſtead of all theſe proofs and many others to the ſame point, I had produced only one of them, it would have been ſufficient for my purpoſe, and the old adage—*ex uno diſce omnes* would have ſupplied the reſt.

* As in *The Comedy of Errors*, Act III. ſc. ii.

"*Nor* to her bed *no* homage do I owe;"

inſtead of which we have in the ſecond folio,

"Nor to her bed *a* homage do I owe."

† Pref. to the late edit. p. xxxi.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding, however, all that I have now ſtated, you know there are ſome men in the world, who will not relinquiſh their old *mumpſimus*; who when once they have taken up a particular notion, adhere to it with unconquerable pertinacity, and cannot be argued out of it: With ſuch men, neither the deciſive circumſtance I have juſt now mentioned, (the death of our poet's friends, Heminge and Condell, before the end of 1630,) nor the unanſwerable proofs which I have accumulated of the ignorance and temerity of the editor of the ſecond folio, will have the ſmalleſt weight, or at all depreciate its credit: and if they ſhould ever be allowed to ſcribble in the margin of Shakſpeare, notwithſtanding theſe accumulated proofs we ſhould without doubt be reminded, whenever occaſion offered, that "Such is the reading of that moſt excellent and invaluable book the ſecond folio edition of our author's plays; a reading which Mr. M. has not been aſhamed to own that he has adopted, though he has expreſsly denied the authenticity of the book".

And now let me add a word or two on the ſubject of inconſiſtency. Though I proved this book of no *authority* whatſoever, does it therefore follow that I was precluded from

adopting the few emendations of manifeſt errors of the preſs, which, amidſt ſome thouſand innovations and corruptions, were made by the editor; and which, if they had not been made by him, would unqueſtionably have been made by ſome other perſon? The plan which I adopted for my edition, as far as relates to the text, was very ſimple. I began by aſcertaining what were the authentick copies. I then formed my text upon thoſe copies; from which (with the exception mentioned in my preface) I never knowingly deviated without apprizing the reader by a note. All emendations therefore which were admitted, from whatever quarter taken, are regularly aſcribed to him by whom they were made; a piece of juſtice which had not been done in former editions: and neither the caprice of an editor or commentator, or his general inability for his taſk, prevented me from adopting corrections ſuggeſted by him, if they were manifeſtly right. Thus, ſome emendations have been taken even from Pope and Hanmer, as well as from the editor of the ſecond folio; though all theſe editors have with almoſt equal licentiouſneſs corrupted the author's text; but they are adopted, not becauſe their books are of any *authority*, but becauſe the emendations themſelves are evidently juſt; for

for the editor of the ſecond folio, as ſoon as his book is proved not to be authentick, can rank only by the ſide of any other conjecturer, commentator, or verbal critick. And on the ſame ground, if the moſt obſcure and contemptible pamphleteer ſhould ſuggeſt a happy correction of any deſperate paſſage, manifeſtly corrupt, to the propriety and rectitude of which every intelligent reader muſt at once aſſent, it would have a claim to attention, however little reſpect ſhould be due to the quarter from whence it came. With how much caution however I have proceeded in this reſpect, my book will ſhew.

If the ſecond folio had been of any *authority*, then all the capricious innovations of that copy (in which deſcription I do not include the innumerable errors of the preſs) muſt have been adopted; but being once proved not to be authentick, then in the caſe of a paſſage undoubtedly corrupt in the original and authentick copies, we are at liberty to admit an emendation ſuggeſted by any later editor or commentator, if a neater and more plauſible correction than that furniſhed by the ſecond folio; and this I have done more than once.

On comparing two of the quarto editions of *King Richard III.* I found that there were in the latter no leſs than twenty-ſix errors of omiſſion; and indeed errors of omiſſion are, I believe, more frequent than almoſt any other in the ancient copies of this author. I have proved in various inſtances, that when a word was omitted or corrupted in the firſt folio, the editor of the ſecond either left the paſſage as he found it, or cured the defect at random, and according to his fancy, in thoſe plays of which we have quarto copies, where the true word, which in fact was omitted or corrupted, may be found.* There cannot therefore be the ſmalleſt doubt that all the emendations made by this editor in the other plays alſo, of which there are no quarto copies, were merely conjectural. Being ſuch, they ſtand preciſely on the ſame ground with the emendations ſuggeſted by any later editor or commentator; and as they are often very injudicious in conſequence of the editor's extreme ignorance of Shakſpeare's phraſeology and metre, they ſtand frequently on a worſe ground, and have a leſs title to be adopted.

* Pref. to the late edition, pp. xiv. xv. xxvii. n. 4; xxx. xxxi.

The

The few corrections which have been taken from that copy, on the principle juſt now mentioned,* have been pompouſly diſplayed; a liſt

* Such as, in *The Tempeſt*,

" —— ſuch *iſlanders*,"

inſtead of the erroneous reading of the authentick copy,— " ſuch *iſlands*."

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

" —— and I *a* ſheep."
for " —— and *I ſheep*."

Ibidem. " —— you have *teſtern'd* me."
for " —— you have *ceſtern'd* me."

In *Meaſure for Meaſure*,

" The *princely* Angelo."
for " The *prenzie* Angelo."

Ibid. " —— ache, *penury*, and impriſonment."
for " —— ache, *perjury*, and impriſonment."

Ibid. " —— was affianced to her *by* oath,
for " —— was affianced *to her oath*.

In *The Comedy of Errors*,

" Gave *helpful* welcome ——."
for " Gave *healthful* welcome ——."

Ibid. " And as a *bed* I'll take thee, and there lie."
inſtead of " And as a *bud*, &c."

Ibid.

a list of them having been collected from my own volumes, without the aid of which it does not

Ibid. " Master, if *you* do —."
instead of " Master, *if do* —."

In *As you like it*,

" —— that which had too *much*."
for " —— that which had too *must*."

Ibid. " Let me *be* better acquainted with thee,
for " Let me better acquainted with thee.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*,

" Were she as rough —."
for " Were she *is* as rough —."

Ibid. " As much news as *thou wilt*."
for " As much news as *wilt thou*."

Ibid. " Whither away, and *where* is thy abode."
for " Whither away, and *whither* is thy abode."

In *All's well that ends well*,

" —— captious and *intenible* sieve—
for " —— captious and *intemible* sieve."

In *Twelfth Night*,

" Let thy tongue *tang* with arguments of state.
for " Let thy tongue *langer*, &c.

In *Macbeth*,

" —— before *thy* here-approach."
for " —— before *they* here approach.

In

not appear that it could have been made, at leaſt it never was made before the late edition was publiſhed.

In *King John*,

" —— to hurt his maſter, no *man* elſe."
inſtead of " —— to hurt his maſter, no *mans* elſe."

In *King Henry VIII.*

" Good man, thoſe joyful tears ſhew thy true *heart*."
inſtead of " Good man, thoſe joyful tears ſhew thy true *hearts*."

A few more emendations of nearly the ſame kind might be added, which together with the above are regularly noticed in the late edition. The interpolations, omiſſions, and corruptions of every kind in the ſecond folio, (of which the fiftieth part has not been noticed) amount, on the other hand, *to ſeveral thouſands*.

I may add, that of the very few emendations ſomewhat leſs obvious than the above, which I have admitted, and which do not, I think, amount to fix, I find every day ſome reaſon to doubt. Juſt as my edition was iſſuing from the preſs, I found that with the other modern editors I had improperly adopted a word which had been unneceſſarily ſupplied by this editor, from his not attending to Shakſpeare's elliptical language. The paſſage is in *A Midſummer-Night's Dream*, Act I. ſc. i.

" Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
" Unto his lordſhip, whoſe unwiſhed yoke
" My ſoul conſents not to give ſovereignty."

i. e.

publiſhed. By turning over the pages of my work, as I have conſtantly noticed from whence every emendation was taken, this liſt was eaſily formed; but it has been exhibited with that inaccuracy which might have been expected; for in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II. ſc. iii. I am repreſented as having adopted a corrupt reading found in the ſecond folio, ("If a chriſtian *did* not play the knave, and get thee," &c.) though I have expreſsly written a note to ſhew that this reading was the offspring of ignorance in the

i. e. to give ſovereignty *to*. See APPEND. to the late edition, p. 577. Here the ſecond folio reads—*to* whoſe *unwiſh'd* yoke, &c. and we are told it is a moſt valuable correction.—So I have incautiouſly, with the other modern editors, accepted, from the ſame book, "*heady* murder," in *K. Henry V.* inſtead of "*headly* murder," the corrupt reading of the old copy; but the true reading is undoubtedly—*deadly* murder. So, in *Macbeth:*

"With twenty *mortal murders* on their crowns."

And in *Titus Andronicus* a word which has been ſupplied by the ſame editor, and too haſtily accepted, has this moment caught my eye:

"Was there none elſe in Rome to make a ſtale *of*—."

Of, which is not found in the old copy, was introdnced from the ſame inadvertence which led to the corruption of the paſſage above quoted from *A Midſummer-Night's Dream.* See late edit. Vol. VII. p. 128, n. 8; Vol. VIII. p. 472, n. 3; and Vol. IX. p. 469, n. 3.

editor

editor of that book; in *K. John*, Act II. ſc. ii. I am repreſented as having adopted a corrupt reading introduced by the ſame editor, —" *run* on," inſtead of the authentick reading—*roam* on; in a paſſage in *King Henry V.* Act III. ſc. i. I am untruly repreſented as reading with the ſame copy,—" You *nobleſt* Engliſh;" and ſtill *further*, (ſave reverence, as our author ſays, of the word,) to ſhew the amazing acuteneſs and unerring accuracy of this hypercritick, the paſſage is ſtated as being in the Firſt Part of *King Henry IV.* as another paſſage which is quoted from *Meaſure for Meaſure*, is to be found in *The Comedy of Errors*.

As a few trifling emendations made by the ignorant editor of the ſecond folio, have been adopted, ſo on the principle already ſtated the very few obſervations of this Remarker that were entitled to any notice, have been admitted into the late edition. Theſe adopted remarks are to be found, ſays their author, " in Vol. II. 11, 256, 491, 507; III. 27, 77, 316, 394; IV. 497, 504; VI. 146, 273; V. 459; [*which is* correctly *placed after Vol. VI.*] VIII. 634." And here we have another ſpecimen of this Remarker's extraordinary accuracy; for lo! neither in p. 256 of Vol. II. nor in p. 316 of Vol.

Vol. III. is there any thing of his; and in p. 27 of Vol. III. I am ſo far from adopting his comment, that I have maintained a poſition directly ſubverſive of it.

I ſhall now, my dear Sir, trouble you with a very few more words.—In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, p. 120, I have inſerted two notes of my late moſt reſpectable friend Mr. Tyrrwhitt, in which he proves that Shakſpeare ſometimes takes a liberty in extending certain words to complete the meaſure.* Thus, in *The Comedy of Errors*,

" Theſe are the parents to theſe *children*."

" where, (ſays he,) ſome editors, being unneceſſarily alarmed for the metre, have endeavoured to help it by a word of their own,—

" Theſe *plainly* are the parents to theſe children."

" So, (he adds,) *country* is made a triſyllable.

T. N. Act. I. ſc. ii.

" The like of him. Know'ſt thou this *country*?"

Remembrance, quadriſyllable.

T. N. Act. I. ſc. i.

" And laſting in her ſad *remembrance*."

* Mr. Upton had made the ſame remark. See his *Critical Obſervations on Shakſpeare*, 2d edit. p. 372.

Angry,

Angry, triſyllable.

Timon, Act III. ſc. v.

"But who is man, that is not *angry*."

Henry, triſyllable.

Rich. III. Act. II. ſc. iii.

"So ſtood the ſtate when *Henry* the Sixth—"

2 Henry VI. Act. II. ſc. ii.

"Crown'd by the name of *Henry* the Fourth."

And ſo in many other paſſages.

Monſtrous, triſyllable.

Macb. Act. IV. ſc. vi.

"Who cannot want the thought how *monſtrous*—"

Othello, Act. II. ſc. iii.

"'Tis *monſtrous*. Iago, who began it?"

England, triſyllable.

Rich. II. Act. IV. ſc. i.

"Than Bolingbroke return to *England*."

Nobler, triſyllable.

Coriol. Act. III. ſc. ii.

"You do the *nobler*. *Cor*. I muſe my mother—."

It would be quite unneceſſary to add that Shakſpeare intended that the words *children*, *country*, *monſtrous*, ſhould in theſe places be pronounced *childeren*, *countery*, *monſterous*, if the oppugner of this doctrine had not had the folly to repreſent ſuch a notion as chimerical and abſurd; imagining himſelf (as it ſhould ſeem) ſupremely comical, when

he exhibits words of this kind at full length,—*Engle-and*, *noble-er*, *wrangle-ing*, *ſwor-en*, *a-rums*, *how-ers*, &c. Had he been at all acquainted with our elder poets, he would have known that this pronunciation was ſo common, that, words formerly having been frequently ſpelt by the ear, we often find theſe words written as Shakſpeare uſed them; *ſower*, *hower*, *fier*, &c.

The inſtances given above are but a few of thoſe which Mr. Tyrwhitt has collected, to prove a poſition which is incontrovertible. He might have produced many more. Thus, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act. II. ſc. iv.

" And that hath *dazzled* my reaſon's light;—"

where the ignorant editor of the ſecond folio, not perceiving that *dazzled* was uſed as a triſyllable, (*dazzle-ed*) has departed from the original copy, and reads—

" And that hath dazzled *ſo* my reaſon's light."

Again, in *Coriolanus*, Act. I. ſc. ix.

" As you have been; that's for my *country*."

And had he not choſen to confine himſelf to words in which *l*, or *r*, is ſubjoined to another conſonant, the following inſtances of words extended for the ſake of the metre, might have been added:

In

In *The Comedy of Errors*, Act. v. ſc. i.

" This week he hath been heavy, *ſour*, ſad."

(where in the original copy we find the word *ſour* written as Shakſpeare intended it to be pronounced,—*ſower*:) and in the ſame play,

" I'll meet you at that place ſome *hour*, hence."

for which in the ſecond folio we have

" I'll meet you at that place ſome hour, *ſir*, hence."

Again, in *K. John*, Act. I. ſc. i.

" Kneel thou down, Philip, but riſe *more* great."

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act. II. ſc. iii.

" And is not like the *fire*. Honours thrive—".

In all theſe caſes, this hypercritick thinks he has completely overturned the doctrine contended for, by writing the words at full length, —*dazzle-ed*, *counte-ry*, *ſou-er*, *fi-er*, &c. a ſpecies of confutation entirely new. Chaucerizing *more*, and exhibiting it thus,—*mo-ré*, he ſeems to think extremely humorous. The old Engliſh name, *Gore*, and the ſurname of a noble family, *Gower*, might have taught him

better. *More* and *pour* as eaſily become *mo-er* and *pow-er*, as *ſour* and *hour* become *ſow-er* and *how-er*; and *arm*, by a vulgar provincial pronunciation not yet wholly diſuſed becomes *a-rum*, as eaſily as *alarm* is converted into *alarum*; two words that undoubtedly had the ſame etymology.—But of theſe verbal diſquiſitions enough.

Let us now examine the complaint to which theſe notes of Mr. Tyrwhitt's have given birth. "The editor" [i. e. Mr. M.] we are told, "has inſerted both Mr. Tyrwhitt's notes, without taking notice of the concluſive reply already made to the latter." This reply, I muſt inform you, appears to have been made by this ſagacious remarker himſelf. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* —But how ſtands the fact? The comedy of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was printed in the year 1786. It ſhould ſeem therefore not to have been a crime of very great magnitude not to have ſubjoined to Mr. Tyrwhitt's note a reply to it which was made two years afterwards, viz. in 1788. It might however, we ſhall perhaps be told, have been inſerted in the Appendix. But unluckily to this there was an unſurmountable objection; which was, that the editor had originally reſolved not to encum-

ber his page with any uſeleſs comment, and the *concluſive* reply in queſtion appeared to him unworthy of notice.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's remark, which I have in part recited, makes it unneceſſary for me to take any further notice of the unfounded obſervations that have been made relative to the licence which Shakſpeare has occaſionally taken in his metre. For that licence, which it ſhould be remembered he has taken in common with his contemporaries, he alone is anſwerable. If an editor in exhibiting his works has religiouſly adhered to the original and authentick copies, admitting with the greateſt caution occaſional corrections of manifeſt errors, he has done his duty, as far as concerns the text; and need give himſelf little concern about the illiberal cenſures of thoſe who, like the preſent hypercritick, from ignorance of the poet's metre arraign his editor, for not having in various inſtances "*endeavoured to help it by a word of his own,*" or by that which would have been equally improper, an interpolation of Pope or Hanmer, or the editor of the ſecond folio.

The anonymous writer, who has occaſioned my preſent addreſs to you, ſeems to think that

he has an excluſive privilege to all the nonſenſe to which the commentaries produced by the late editors of Shakſpeare have given riſe. On this ground, a remark in anſwer to one of Dr. Johnſon's in the firſt act of *Troilus and Creſſida*, having been ſlightly noticed in the late edition, this monopolizer will have it that *he* muſt have been meant; and no ſuch remark being in fact found in his book, with his wonted decorum he charges the editor with *forgery*. But ſtrange as it may appear, moſt true it is, that there are others now living capable of writing remarks on Shakſpeare and his editors, beſide himſelf, though not with ſuch a total diſregard of decency; and that the obſervation in queſtion appeared among ſome REMARKS on Mr. Steevens's edition, which were publiſhed in a miſcellaneous volume, in 1785.

One other paſſage only of this *elegant* and *modeſt* performance remains to be noticed. In the firſt volume of the late edition of Shakſpeare I have mentioned that a pamphlet, which is now avowed by this writer as his production, was ſuppreſſed after its original publication, from *modeſty* as it ſhould ſeem; and that afterwards it was once more given to the world by its author. *Nothing*, ſays the fond parent

parent, *can be more incorrect than this ſtatement. The truth is, that after a few copies had got abroad, the further ſale was delayed, for ſpecial purpoſes, for a week, at the end of which the publication was continued.*—Such, I think, is the ſubſtance of this *Quip*, for ſo this writer chooſes to denominate ſome of his ſhrewd and ſagacious remarks, though he does not deal much either in *cranks* or *wanton wiles*. The difference between being *ſuppreſſed for a certain time*, and *the ſale being delayed, after the original publication, for a week*, is not very eaſily diſcovered. The *modeſty*, however, aſcribed to the author, it muſt be owned, he utterly diſavows.—The grievance ſtated on this occaſion muſt immediately remind you of that complained of by the well-known Edmund Curl, who ſaid Mr. Pope had treated him very unfairly in telling the publick that he had been toſs'd in a *blanket*, when all the world knew that he had only been toſs'd in a *rug*.

Though from a very careful peruſal of many contemporary writers, I was enabled to make very large additions to the former comments on our author, and took at leaſt as much pains in illuſtrating his obſcurities as in aſcertaining his text, you will obſerve that I have

I have not taken notice of any remarks that have been made on the commentaries which I had the honour of ſubmiting to the publick in my late edition. While I was employed in preparing them for the preſs, I gave the various ſubjects treated of, the ſtricteſt attention. They are before the publick, and by its judgment they muſt ſtand or fall. I ſhall not enter into any diſcuſſion or controverſy with "occaſional criticks" or "criticks by profeſſion," in order to ſupport them.—It is curious that what Dr. Warburton ſaid near fifty years ago, ſhould be ſtill true of the *greater part* of the criticiſms to which the labours of his ſucceſſors have given riſe: "—as to all thoſe things which have been publiſhed under the titles of *Eſſays*, *Remarks*, *Obſervations*, *&c. on Shakſpeare*,"—they "are abſolutely below a ſerious notice.*"

I have many apologies to make for having taken up ſo much of your time, and will now releaſe you. I cannot, however, conclude, without noticing one other charge brought againſt the late editor of Shakſpeare, which is

* Mr. Tyrwhitt's *Obſervations* publiſhed in 1766, and Mr. Maſon's *Comments* in 1785, are an exception.

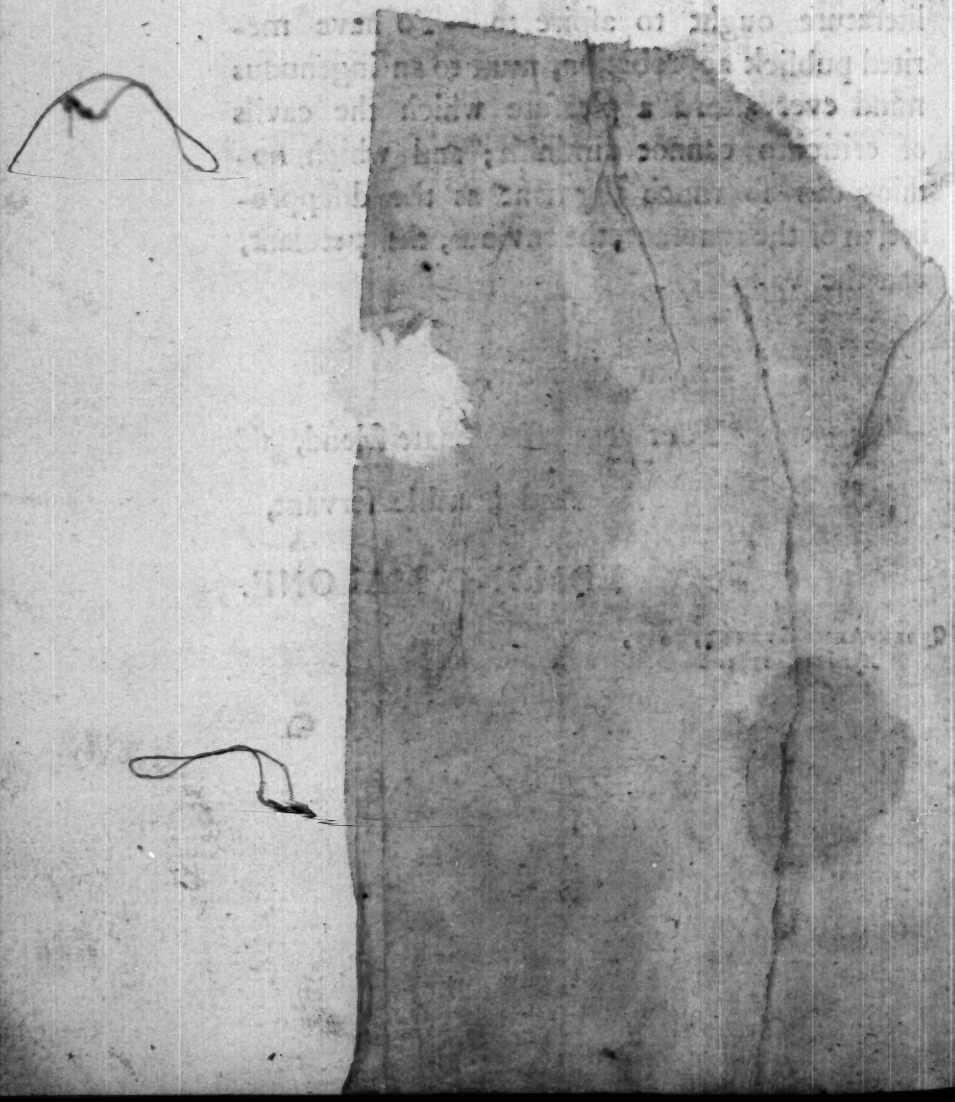
perfectly

perfectly novel. "The reciprocal good opinion" (we are told) "which the publick and Mr. MALONE appear to entertain of each other, does both parties infinite honour." It is, I believe, the firſt time that the good opinion of the publick has ever been ſtated as a matter of reproach to him who has had the good fortune to obtain it. If by my humble labours I had any title to ſuppoſe the publick had been pleaſed and benefited, I ſhould conſider myſelf as having obtained the beſt reward which it has to beſtow, or the ſons of literature ought to aſpire to.—To have merited publick approbation, muſt to an ingenuous mind ever afford a pleaſure which the cavils of criticiſm cannot diminiſh; and which nothing can ſo much augment as the diſapprobation of the ignorant, the envious, the petulant, and the vain.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend,

And humble ſervant,

EDMOND MALONE.

QUEEN-ANNE STREET, EAST,
April 15, 1791.